

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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R 111501Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4291

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMCONGEN BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 4939

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GT, BH, UK

SUBJECT: BELIZE

REF: GUATEMALA 4860

1. DURING CALL BY AMBASSADOR ON PRESIDENT LAUGERUD
SEPTEMBER 9 AT AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST, FIRST SUBJECT
RAISED BY PRESIDENT WAS BELIZE. HE SAID HE KNOW THAT
FONMIN HAD DISCUSSED BELIZE WITH AMBASSADOR ONLY FIVE DAYS
EARLIER (REFTEL), BUT PROBLEM CONTINUED UPPERMOST IN
MINDS OF PRESIDENT AND HIS GOVERNMENT. HE WAS AFRAID
THAT PRIME MINISTER PRICE MIGHT BE CONTEMPLATING SOME HASTY
AND EARLY MOVE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. PRESIDENT SAID THIS
WOULD BE DISASTER AND COULD BENEFIT NO ONE SINCE GUATEMALAN
ARMED FORCES WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO "ATTACK" IMMEDIATELY.
THIS WOULD INVOLVE NOT ONLY GUATEMALA AND BELIZE
BUT UK AND U.S. AND OTHER NATIONS AS WELL. IT COULD
NOT HELP ANYONE. PRESIDENT SAID HE BELIVED FIRMLY
THAT FORCE DID NOT REALLY SETTLE ANYTHING. THEREFORE,
IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO TALK TOGETHER AND TO SEEK PEACEFUL
SOLUTIONS. EVEN IF THESE SOLUTIONS WERE NOT
EASY TO ARRIVE AT AND THE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE
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PROLONGED, A SITUATION WHICH WOULD PRECIPITATE USE OF

FORCE MUST BE AVOIDED.

2. AMBASSADOR ASKED IF PRESIDENT HAD SPECIFIC INFORMATION WHICH CAUSED HIS CURRENT CONCERN. HE RPLIED THAT HE HAD INFORMATION FROM FOUR DIFFERENT SOURCES THAT PRICE MIGHT BE UP TO SOMETHING. GUATEMALAN CONSUL IN BELIZE, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD RECENTLY REPORTED INFORMATION TO THIS EFFECT FROM WELL-PLACED MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL CONGRESS.

3. PRESIDENT SAID GUATEMALA WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR US GOOD OFFICES TO COUNSEL RESTRAINT, AND TO URGE PRICE TO TAKE NO HASTY OR DRASTIC ACTION. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT HE HAD ALREADY REPORTED TO WASHINGTON FONMIN'S CONVERSATION WITH HIM. AMBASSADOR AGREED WITH PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT THAT NO ONE WULD BENEFIT SHOULD MATTERS REACH CRISIS PROPORTIONS. AMBASSADOR FELT IT WAS IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST - HE STRESSED EVERYONE'S - TO AVOID DRASTIC AND HASTY ACTIONS AND TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

4. COMMENT: WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE ACCURATE, REPORTS OF SOME IMPENDING MOVE BY BELIZE GOVERNMENT HAVE UNQUESTIONABLY BEEN RECEIVED BY GOG AND LATTER'S DEEP CONCERN IS REAL. NOR DO WE BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE ANY DOUBT ABOUT GUATEMALAN'S INTENTION TO INVADE BELIZE IF INDEPENDENCE DECLARED. ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT AND OTHER ADDRESSEES WHICH DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH US TO CONVEY TO GOG TO GOG TO AVOID POSSIBLE MISREADING OF SITUATION WOULD BE WELCOME.

5. SUBSTANCE OF THIS MESSAGE AS WELL AS OF GUATEMALA 4860 HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE IN CONFIDENCE TO NEW BRITISH CONSUL HERE.
MELOY

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